In addition an amount of Rs. 4.22 crores has been released from DNES for Biogas programme.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

Blast at a firework factory at Sivakasi

1711. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state : (a) Whether it is a fact that a firework factory at Sivakasi suffered a major blast killing at least 116 persons;

(b) whether any inquiry into the accident has been conducted;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof;

(d) whether the factory observed the safety rules;

(e) whether Government are aware that these factories employ child labour on a large-scale violating all laws against child labour;

(f) whether such blasts have also taken place in Bihar and elsewhere; and

(g) if so, what safety measures Government are planning to take to prevent large-scale loss of life and property ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI) : (a) A major explosion followed by fire occurred in a fireworks manufacturing factory viz. M/s. Bharat Fireworks Industries located at Sivakasi in the State of Tamilnadu on 14-9-92 in which 16 persons were killed and 22 persons injured.

(b) and (c) An inquiry under Section 9 of the Explosives Act, 1984 (4 of 1984) has been ordered by the State Government and is being conducted by the District Revenue Officer and Additional District Megistrate, Kamarajar District. An investigation into the technical aspects of the accident, ordered by this Ministry, is being Conducted by the Deputy Chief Controlle of Explosives In-charge, Sivakasi office of the Department of Explosives. Reports of the inquiry and investigation are still awaited.

(d) No specific violation of the terms of the licence issued under the Explosive Rules, 1983 to M/s. Bharat Fireworks industries has been reported so far.

(e) Fireworks factories licensed under the Explosive Rules, 1983 are not permitted to employ persons under 18 years of age. No violation of this provision has so far been reported in respect of such licensed fireworks factories.

(f) Accidents involving fireworks took place during illegal manufacture of fireworks on 7-10-92 in a community hall in Jammikothatalem near Nellore in the State of Andhra Pradesh, in which 7 persons were killed and 15 persons injured and on 8-10-92 in a residential building in Ahmedabad in the State of Gujarat, in which 14 persons were killed and 7 persons injured. Another such accident took place on 25-10-92 in a fireworks shop in Jharia in the State of Bihar, in which 21 persons were killed and 16 persons injured. This accident is suspected to have occurred due to fire originated during illegal manufacture of fireworks in the upper storey of the fireworks shop.

(g) A research study is proposed to be initiated to go into the chemical composition of the fireworks, the design parmeters and lay-out of the fireworks building, the type of dress materials being used by workers engaged in the manufacture of fireworks, etc., with view to enhance the existing safety standard in firtworks factories. As regards illegal manufacture of fireworks, the District and Police Authorities are required to locate such premises and take appropriate action.

Increase in investment limit for SSI

1712. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to extend various concessions to small-scale sector;

(b) whether Government have received any representation for extending the existing level of investment limit for SSI;